

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01

L-03 H-02 DODE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 FEA-01 DOTE-00 HUD-01 /083 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:WHEDGAR:BG

APPROVED BY EUR:JAARMITAGE

EUR/P - FSEIDNER

EUR/SOV - RBARRY

C - JMONTGOMERY

USDOC - MR. KEMP

USDOT - MR. VASTINE

S/S-O:LRMACFARLANE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 061191

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: DELAY IN MEETING OF JOINT US-USSR COMMERCIAL
COMMISSION

1. WE HAVE DECIDED TO DELAY THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE
JOINT US-USSR COMMERCIAL COMMISSION UNTIL THE SECOND HALF
OF THIS YEAR.

2. ALTHOUGH NO SPECIFIC DATES WERE DISCUSSED WITH THE
SOVIETS, WE HAD BEEN PLANNING TO HOLD THE MEETING IN
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WASHINGTON IN APRIL. WE ARE POSTPONING IT IN ORDER TO

CONVEY TO THE SOVIETS AND OTHERS THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED AT THE PRESENT TIME TO CONDUCT ALL ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONS ON A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL BASIS, AND THAT SOME ACTIONS ON THEIR PART CAN HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE MOMENTUM AND LEVEL OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE DELAY OF THE JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION MEETING THUS PARALLELS THE ACTION WE HAVE TAKEN ON THE JOINT ENERGY COMMITTEE AND SECRETARY HILL'S VISIT.

3. TREASURY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY MET WITH SOVIET EMBASSY TRADE REPRESENTATIVE MKRTUMOV TODAY (MARCH 12) TO INFORM HIM OF THIS DECISION. PARSKY TOLD MKRTUMOV THAT THE US SIDE CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT TO MEET AT A TIME WHEN THE OVERALL CLIMATE IS FAVORABLE AND WHEN THE MEETING CAN THEREFORE PRODUCE MEANINGFUL RESULTS. PARSKY EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IN NO WAY INDICATES A DESIRE ON THE PART OF USG TO DECREASE IMPORTANCE OF COMMISSION, OR OF OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP, BUT DEMONSTRATES INSTEAD USG VIEW THAT COMMISSION IS IMPORTANT AND SHOULD THEREFORE MEET AT APPROPRIATE TIME. PARSKY WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC DATE. HE DID NOT DO SO, BUT SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS IT COULD MEET IN THE SUMMER OR EARLY FALL. HE PROMISED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH SOVIETS LATER TO ARRANGE A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE DATE.

4. PARSKY ALSO EXPRESSED USG DESIRE TO HOLD MEETING OF COMMISSION'S WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS IN APRIL, IF DEPUTY MINISTER MANZHULO IS AVAILABLE.

5. MKRTUMOV SAID HE WOULD CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO PATOLICHEV AND MANZHULO AND INFORM PARSKY OF SOVIET VIEWS ON TIMING OF EXPERTS' MEETING.

6. WE DO NOT PLAN TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING HAS BEEN DELAYED. WE HAVE PREPARED THE FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE IN THE EVENT THE MATTER IS RAISED HERE OR IN MOSCOW:

Q: HAVE WE POSTPONED A MEETING OF THE JOINT US-USSR COMMERCIAL COMMISSION?
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A: THIS YEAR'S MEETING HAS NOT YET BEEN SCHEDULED. IT MAY PERHAPS BE HELD IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR. WE HOPE TO HOLD THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ITS WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS IN WASHINGTON IN APRIL TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON ECONOMIC, INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL TRENDS.

7. IF PRESSED FURTHER ABOUT WHY THE MEETING IS NOT

BEING HELD UNTIL LATER, WE WOULD SAY: QUOTE AMONG OTHER THINGS, BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THIS MEETING WHICH WOULD INVOLVE CABINET-LEVEL US OFFICIALS WE WISHED TO HAVE MORE TIME TO ASSESS THE TREND IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS. UNQUOTE.

8. IF ASKED WHETHER OTHER MEETINGS HAVE BEEN POSTPONED, AND WHETHER THIS REPRESENTS A NEW PATTERN IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS, WE WOULD SAY: QUOTE WE HAVE DECIDED TO DELAY HOLDING TWO OTHER HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS OF THIS KIND UNTIL THE TREND OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IS CLEARER. THESE WERE THE JOINT ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 15-17, AND A MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION TENTATIVELY SET FOR MAY. INGERSOLL

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